



## Electrodialytic separation of phosphorus and heavy metals from sewage sludge ash

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*Publication date:*  
2015

*Document Version*  
Peer reviewed version

[Link back to DTU Orbit](#)

*Citation (APA):*  
Parés Viader, R., Jensen, P. E., Ottosen, L. M., Ahrenfeldt, J., & Hauggaard-Nielsen, H. (2015). *Electrodialytic separation of phosphorus and heavy metals from sewage sludge ash*. Poster session presented at EMS Summer School 2015, Liberec, Czech Republic.

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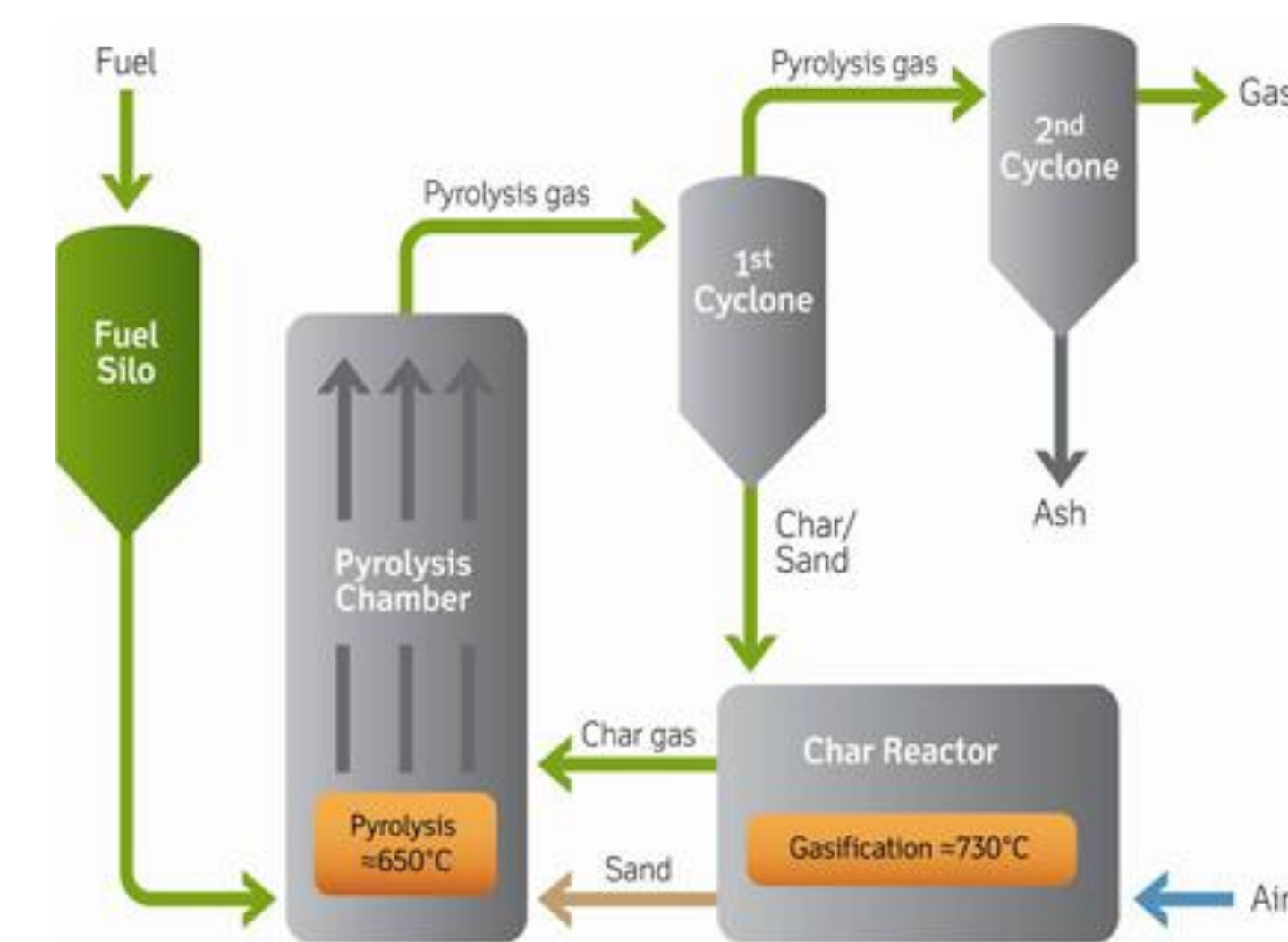


## EMS Summer School 2015

### Phosphorous –Some facts

- Phosphorous is a limited resource and an **essential nutrient**.
- Phosphate rock (P-rock) reserves are foreseen to be **depleted in 300-400 years** [1].
- In the last decade, the **EU imported around 90 % of the P-rock** that it consumed (IFA).
- In the EU there is a flow of 182,000 t of **non-recycled P yearly from sewage sludge**, around 20% of the EU P-rock consumption (Van Dijk et al. (submitted)).
- A common practice in some countries (DE, NL, BE, AT, CH, US, JP, HK) is **incineration** of sewage sludge. In recent years, **gasification** has gained attention.

### Low-temperature gasification technology



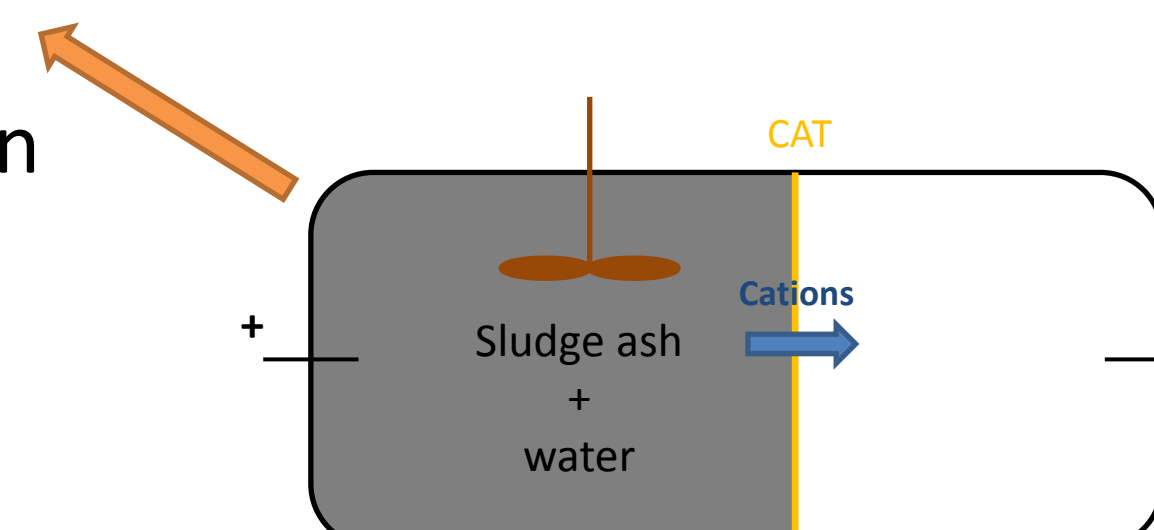
- Due to the low temperature it is possible to use high alkaline fuels. Examples: straw, sewage sludge, etc.
- The resulting ashes, might have a high content in heavy metals or have a poor P-plant availability

### Electrodialysis: a technology to recover P from sewage sludge ashes

- A patent has been filed from DTU (WO 2015/032903) for the 2-compartment Electrodialytic (ED) cell.

Anolyte liquid:

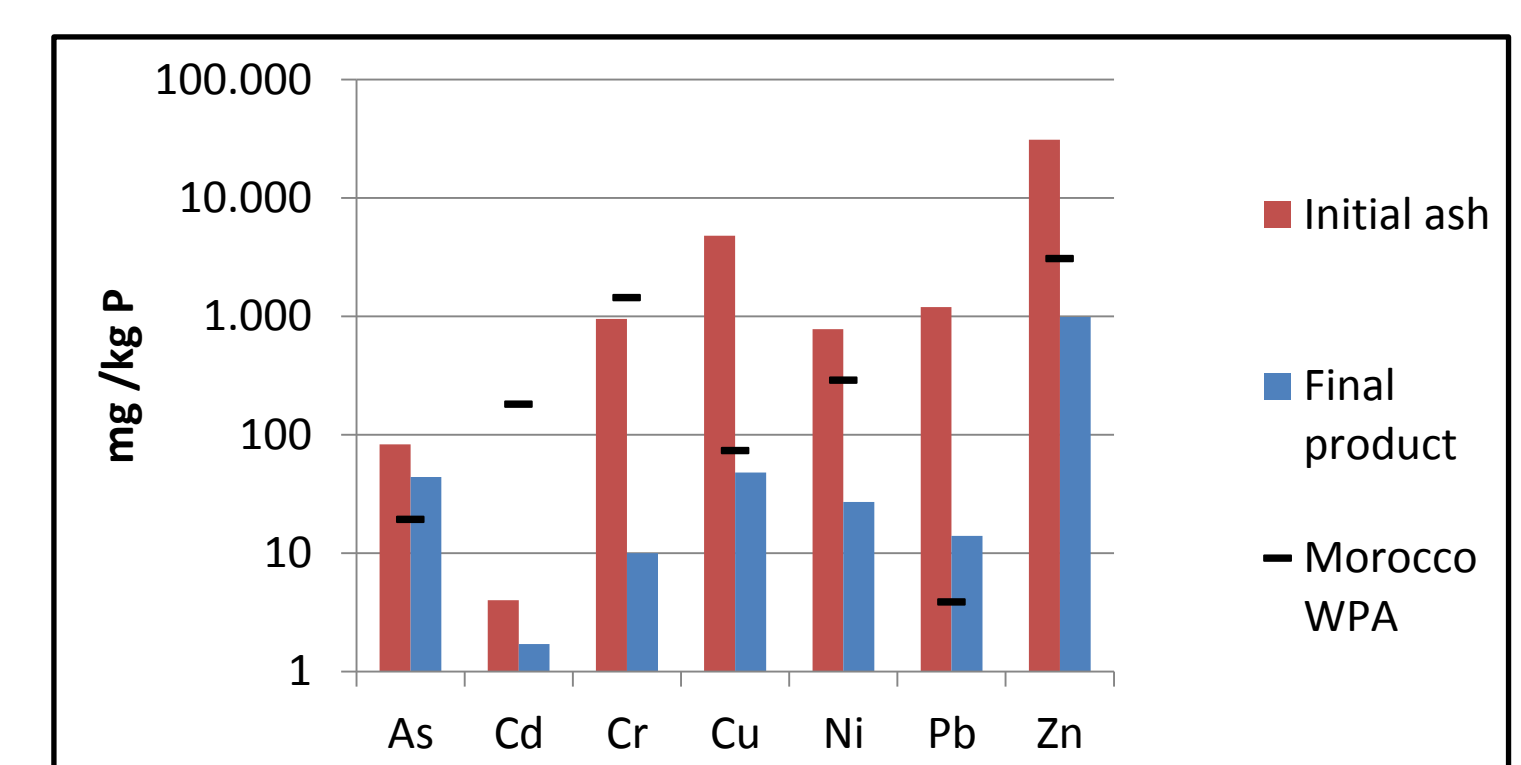
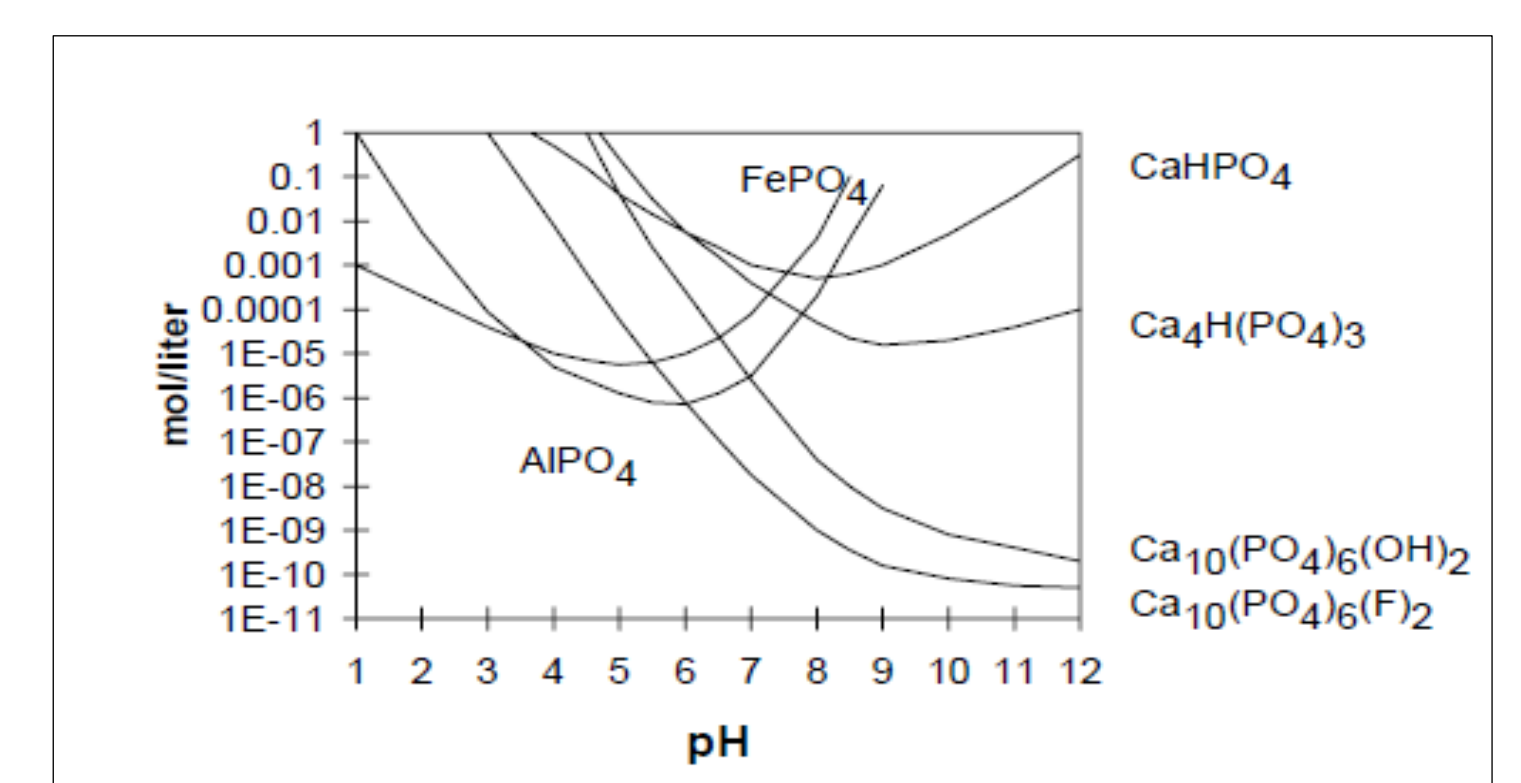
- P-rich
- Acidic ( $H^+$  generated in the anode)
- Low in heavy metals



Catholyte liquid:  
Mostly Ca and heavy metals

Bulk ash: can be reused in construction industry

- With this setup, it is possible to recover up to **90% of P from incineration sewage sludge ashes**, in the anolyte liquid with low content in heavy metals (Cd, Cr, Cu, Ni, Pb, Zn) [2].
- Only 26% of P** was recovered with the same setup at the same conditions (liquid-to-solid ratio, current density and experimental time) with **gasification sewage sludge ashes** [3]. Most likely, due to the presence of **Fe-P bindings**. Poor results were previously observed for ashes with high Al content [4].
- Up to 70% of P** was eventually recovered for the same ashes with an innovative ED setup. The recovered P-liquid has a content in heavy metals **comparable to the one of wet phosphoric acid**. The new setup is currently being drafted for a patent filing.
- Further work will focus on sewage sludge ashes containing both **high content of Fe and Al**.



### References

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- [4] L.M. Ottosen, P.E. Jensen, G.M. Kirkelund, Electrodialytic Separation of Phosphorus and Heavy Metals from Two Types of Sewage Sludge Ash, Separation Science and Technology 49 (2014) 1910–1920.